

JUDITH FINN ON GROWING *Pinguicula laeana*

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Early in 1998 I had the pleasure of discussing carnivores with Judith Finn, horticulturist at Berkeley Botanical Gardens. I was most interested in how she grows her marvelous specimens of *Pinguicula laeana*. Look at the front cover to see why I am so entranced by this plant!



CPN: I've seen the *Pinguicula laeana* you grow at Berkeley. It is marvelous.

JF: Yes, the red flowers are really nice. *Pinguicula laeana* flowers for about seven months of the year; it's a long bloomer. The foliage is also red and very pretty.

CPN: I see you have them in clay pots. What kind of soil do you use?

JF: I like to use a fine, well-drained mix of sand, peat, and fine pumice or perlite, in a 1:1:1 ratio. Live *Sphagnum* is pretty, but it can overgrow the *Pinguicula*.

CPN: How do you water it?

JF: Keep the soil just moist year-round. *Pinguicula laeana* is shallow-rooted, but you should use a tall pot. This way, during the winter the pot wicks up water but the plant doesn't sit in water all the time. During the summer it can stay in a saucer of water. Use purified water like rainwater or from reverse osmosis.



Figure 1: *P. laeana*, photograph by B. Meyers Rice.

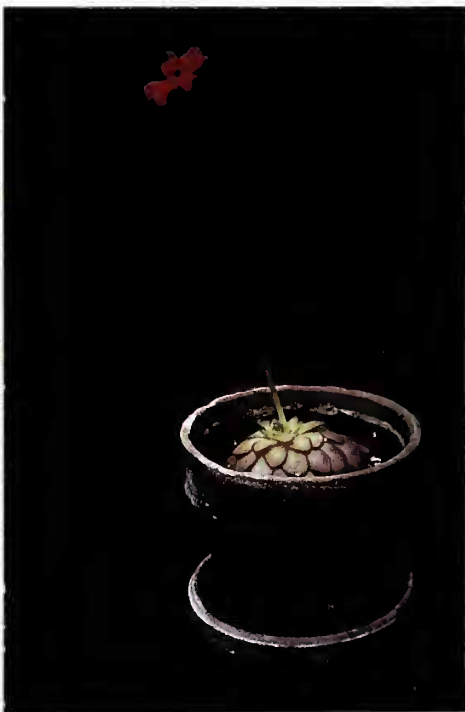


Figure 2: *P. laeana*, photograph by E.M. Salvia.

CPN: You grow your plants in a greenhouse in the San Francisco Bay area, which is generally foggy. Do you need any extra lighting?

JF: This doesn't seem to be too important—we get moderately high light during the summer. During the winter it's more important to supplement the lighting. I use fluorescent bulbs.

CPN: Does this species go dormant?

JF: No, it doesn't seem to go dormant so much as it gets the winter doldrums when the evening temperatures cool down to 55°F (13°C). During the winter it loves temperatures in the 50–60°F (10–16°C) range, but will stand 50–80°F (10–27°C). During the summer it likes 70–80°F (21–27°C), but will take 60–100°F (16–38°C).

CPN: Do you fertilize these? Peter D'Amato accidentally fertilized his with Miracid and ended up killing them (see issue 27:4)!

JF: No fertilizer. Sometimes I give them a little dolomite—lime, that is—or oyster shells. Maybe about a teaspoon (5 cm³) in a cup of water (250 ml) is enough for a few plants. It also helps keep the *Sphagnum* down, which like I said can crowd the plant.

CPN: Do you have any tips on propagation?

JF: I haven't gotten around to pollinating these, but divisions or leaf cuttings work well. For leaf cuttings, I use summer leaves tucked in live *Sphagnum*.

CPN: Well, you are doing a great job. Do you have any other tricks?

JF: This isn't an exact science! I just grow it like *P. moranensis* and it is alive and happy. It is in the same room as some *Sarracenia*, and they are doing alright. It never has had pest problems. It's a good plant.

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